

City of San Diego
Office of Ethics and Integrity

Five Modes of Ethical Leadership

There exist five modes of ethical leadership which identify the levels of authority an ethical leader may practice when considering intervention into the judgments and actions of followers:

Inspiration: focuses on the leader serving as a role model, setting the example and inspiring followers to reach their fullest potential.

Facilitation: leaders actively support and guide the followers where necessary, so they are able to fully contribute their skills and talents.

Persuasion: the leader appeals to reason and attempts to convince their followers to contribute toward the organizational goals.

Manipulation: the leader attempts to influence their followers through offering incentives beyond the intrinsic value level and are most often practiced in a climate where commitment is lacking.

Coercion: occurs when leaders force their followers to contribute their capabilities against their will. Coercion is typically the highest degree of intervention.¹

1. Mendonca, M. (2001). Preparing for ethical leadership in organizations. *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences*, 18, 266-276.